

Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP)
Prison Camera Reform Act of 2021
Plan for Reform of BOP Security Camera and Radio Coverage and Capabilities

Legislative Summary

Section 3 of the Prison Camera Reform Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-321)¹ requires the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a plan for ensuring that all BOP correctional facilities have security camera, land-mobile radio (LMR), and public address (PA) system capabilities to ensure the health and safety of staff and Federal inmates; and to ensure the documentation and accessibility of video evidence that may pertain to misconduct by staff or inmates, negligent or abusive treatment of inmates, or criminal activity within correctional facilities. BOP is required to evaluate current systems in use for security cameras, LMRs, and PA systems. BOP is also required to provide a plan to address deficiencies related to current security camera, land-mobile radio, and public address system capabilities, a plan to address maintenance requirements of any such upgrades, information on any operational and logistical considerations related to upgrades, and to include a three-year strategic plan and cost projections.

Report

Security Cameras:

Current Status:

As of February 2023, there are nearly 25,000 cameras deployed Bureau-wide: almost 20,000 analog cameras in service and almost 5,000 digital security cameras. (As this initiative is an active project, the numbers and types of cameras deployed will change over time.) The Bureau's assessment of its needs is ongoing. The Bureau has identified critical needs and, as discussed below, is filling those needs as quickly as time and resources allow. This includes the need for upgrades, covering existing blind spots, and to ensure we have the appropriate financial resources in place.

Planned Upgrades:

Conversion from Analog to Digital Cameras. BOP is actively expanding the number of cameras in critical areas where BOP has identified additional cameras would expand coverage and oversight. (For example, in one facility that houses women in custody, BOP has assessed an urgent need for additional coverage and is adding 150 new cameras to that institution.²) In addition to the areas that have already been identified and are in the process of being addressed, BOP will continue assessing coverage of these systems to eliminate blind spots and the number of additional cameras needed to address them. We expect this continued assessment will result in identifying additional areas for camera coverage by summer 2023.

¹ See Appendix A for detailed BOP requirements under the Prison Camera Reform Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-321), Section 3, signed into law on December 27, 2022.

² Because of security sensitivities, BOP cannot detail the specific institution names in this report.

Urgent Efforts to Eliminate Blind Spots in Camera Coverage. BOP is increasing the number of cameras in areas where BOP has identified additional cameras would expand coverage and oversight. (For example, as a result of a recent evaluation of potential blind spots in its existing camera system at one institution housing women in custody, BOP is adding 150 new cameras to that institution.³) In addition to the need determinations that have already been completed and are currently being addressed (described below), BOP is prioritizing a further bureau-wide review to assess coverage of these systems to eliminate “blind spots” and the number of additional cameras needed to address them. The review is expected to be completed by summer 2023.

To address current needs, BOP is making this upgrade via a two-fold process. First, the BOP is working to install an improved single mode fiber optic backbone and upgraded network switching at all institutions that do not already have these improvements before digital camera installations can occur. This is a necessary first step in many institutions. Due to the age of the institutions and structural layout, existing wiring works for analog cameras but cannot support the bandwidth requirements for a modern, all-digital platform of security cameras, video management systems, storage, and analytics that are required for improved institution security, and staff and inmate safety.

After the new fiber optics are installed, the second phase of the plan is to install digital cameras. As different institutions are in various stages of requirements (for example, some institutions may currently be ready to install cameras, while others may need complete installation of the single mode fiber network first), this two-stage process will happen simultaneously. With available prior-year funding, BOP has already started work on this conversion process. As of February 15, 2023, fiber optics installation has been completed in 52 institutions.

Windows Upgrade. BOP is also replacing the camera operating systems with new headend equipment to transition to a digital platform, which is essential to this upgrade. Head- end is the specific equipment used to receive, process, and transmit communication signals for the operating system. BOP has updated 119 Windows operating systems in the past 24 months and has two systems remaining. The existing system upgrades have increased video storage capacity and system reliability.

Operational and Logistical Considerations:

Prioritization of Facilities. BOP is prioritizing the upgrades using several factors, including the security level of the institution and the status of the single mode fiber network. Thus far, BOP has prioritized installation of single mode fiber networks at correctional complexes and institutions with high security requirements. BOP will also prioritize female facilities (any security level) in FY 2023. As discussed above, BOP is working simultaneously on fiber installation, camera installation, and video management system upgrades across the Bureau, to enable upgraded cameras to be functional as quickly as possible once fiber networks are in place.

³ Because of security sensitivities, BOP cannot detail the specific institution names in this report.

Personnel and Training Requirements. Given the urgency of this work, BOP will use a combination of contractors and BOP employees to expeditiously complete this work. BOP will require via procurement vehicles that any contractors installing systems are fully qualified to conduct this work. For BOP employees, BOP's Facility Manual PS 4200.12 includes camera system training as recommended training for Electronic Technicians. Training classes are attended by Electronics Technicians annually, which encompasses oversight including installation and system maintenance.

BOP will also ensure Special Investigative Specialists are appropriately trained on the importance of evidence preservation and will review whether current policies should be revised with regard to storage time frames.

Ongoing Repair and Maintenance Requirements. Congress provided BOP approximately \$16 million in camera funding in FY 2023 which, subject to appropriations, is expected to recur yearly. After BOP completes the upgrades, BOP will use base funding to establish a replacement cycle based on the timing of IP camera and Video Management System (VMS) upgrades. BOP currently has a maintenance contract for camera systems in place by a certified vendor until 2025. This national maintenance contract provides 24-hour technical assistance and support via telephone, for repair, programming and network connectivity of cameras and video recording systems for all BOP institutions, including in Puerto Rico and Hawaii, and on-site support is available when applicable.

Three Year Plan and Cost Projections:

Installation of IP Cameras. BOP has formulated a three-year phased plan to complete installation of IP cameras. BOP plans to allocate funding (approximately \$35 Million) in FY 2023 for: cameras in correctional complexes with high security institutions that have completed installation of single mode fiber networks; installation of single mode fiber networks and cameras for female institutions; and remaining single-mode fiber networks and cameras (to the extent funding is available).

As of February 15, 2023, this is the status of BOP's digital camera installation efforts.

Cameras	
Institutions	Status
0	Cameras complete
46	Camera in process (funded in FY 2022)
6	Cameras in process (funded in FY 2023, estimated at 22)
69	Awaiting fiber completion
121	

Fiber	
Institutions	Status
52	Fiber completed
4	Contractor Install (FY 2022)
51	Contractor Install (FY 2023)
14	In-house fiber installation
121	

* No camera installations are occurring at this time at MCC New York, which is currently closed. Camera requirements at MCC New York will be addressed separately as part of a comprehensive review of safety and security issues at the facility.

BOP estimates that over the next three years, the project estimate is approximately \$58 million to complete the digital camera installation. However, the total number of cameras that are required remains under review, which could impact the total funding amount required in the future. Besides availability of appropriations, BOP also notes that timing for completion will depend on whether there are supply chain disruptions of equipment.

Video Management System (VMS). This upgrade will improve the BOP's system monitoring capabilities and eliminate chain of custody inconsistencies along with upgrading to the new operating system. The VMS upgrade will also allow access to all BOP systems to monitor system health and locate exact locations that require repair. BOP expects to complete all site upgrades by the end of FY 2023. The BOP has updated 2 VMS systems and has an aggressive schedule to finish this upgrade this fiscal year.

Personnel and Training Requirements. Electronic Technicians will receive training for VMS and Closed Caption Television (CCTV) systems that are provided to Electronics Technicians upon appointment to the position.

Land Mobile Radio Systems (LMR) and Hand-Held Radios:

Current Status:

Land Mobile Radio Systems. As of February 2023, BOP has 70 SmartNet LMR systems in place, ranging from 12 to 21 years old. The SmartNet trunked radio systems need to be replaced to meet Department-level requirements to use Windows 10, or newer operating software. Parts are increasingly more difficult to procure due to the lack of availability and the age of the system. The newer system (“Core”) is more robust and operates on the DOJ approved system, as well as allowing access to an easily acquired parts inventory. One institution is currently in the award process, and another is currently in the solicitation process for new systems. In the past several years, the conversion to upgraded systems has taken place at 28 institutions, with 68 remaining.

Hand-Held Radios. The BOP is currently in the process of upgrading to APX 6000 hand-held radios, which have a security feature that alerts the Control Center directly from the radio when it is in a horizontal position for the designated period of time. (Some models refer to this as a “man down” feature.) There are almost 21,000 APX 6000s in service to date. As of February 2023, BOP has approximately 13,500 model XTS 5000 handheld radios (that do not have the upgraded security feature) that are operating past their life cycle of approximately 8-10 years. Repair parts are no longer manufactured and spare reserves have been exhausted.

Planned Upgrades:

BOP has evaluated its current system requirements related to land mobile radios and hand-held radios and plans upgrades intended to replace inoperable or malfunctioning LMR systems and those lacking emergency notification features, provide adequate reception for radio operation. The upgrades are intended to enhance the safety and security of staff.

Land Mobile Radio Systems. BOP has already begun work on replacing outdated LMR systems (which are funded out of the Building and Facilities appropriation). (Although all LMR systems currently used by BOP are compatible with the older XTS 5000 hand-held radios as well as APX6000 hand-held radio models, BOP intends to replace SmartNet systems with updated Core systems. This upgrade will allow the BOP to have a system in place that is operating on approved software and easily upgradeable to meet future component needs. The BOP awarded contracts to upgrade three sites during FY 2022 for converting to the Core systems at the following locations.

Hand-Held Radios. BOP has also begun replacing hand-held radios (which are funded out of the Salaries and Expenses appropriation). In FY 2022, \$2 million was allocated for the replacement of radios for two sites to update both to APX 6000 handheld radios.

Operational and Logistical Considerations:

Prioritization of Facilities. BOP is prioritizing the replacement of trunked radio systems based on the security level of the institution (highest level first), and age of the current system in place. Hand-held radios would be prioritized for replacement in the same manner as the trunking systems, by the security level from highest to lowest. Trunking/trunked is a complex system that is capable of using multiple channels or frequencies shared by a large number of users without interference among users.

Personnel and Training Requirements. LMR training is mandatory for Electronics Technicians at all facilities in accordance with the system at each institution.

Ongoing Repair and Maintenance Requirements. BOP has received approximately \$10 million in hand-held radio funding which, subject to appropriations, will recur yearly. After BOP completes the upgrades, BOP will use base funding to establish a replacement cycle based on the timing of radio upgrades. BOP will also establish a replacement cycle for LMR systems once upgrades are completed. BOP currently has a maintenance contract for LMR systems, and systems are serviced annually. BOP also requires hand-held radios to be sent for servicing every 18 months.

Three Year Plan and Cost Projections:

Land Mobile Radio (LMR) Systems. Currently, a total of \$170 Million is needed to replace the remaining LMR systems. Thus far, BOP has upgraded LMR systems on an ad hoc basis with funding from its Buildings and Facilities appropriation account, which also must fund BOP's projects involving infrastructure and security and life safety needs such as fire alarm repair/replacement, water system renovation, roof and electrical repairs, and any emergency requirements. BOP's enacted Buildings and Facilities budget in FY 2023, excluding supplemental funding, was \$108 million, and BOP does not have any base funding to upgrade LMR systems. BOP estimates it will take approximately two years to complete installation of LMR systems after funding is received (assuming supply chain availability).

Hand-Held Radios. BOP will use approximately \$10 million in FY 2023 funds for purchase of hand-held radios. There are currently 50 institutions using XTS 5000 hand-held radios and will cost approximately \$47.5 million to upgrade them to the necessary supporting equipment and APX6000 hand-held radios. The order of priority is determined by a combination of factors to include security level of the institution and age of the system. With current appropriations, it will take BOP approximately 5 years to upgrade all hand-held radios (assuming supply chain availability). Additional funding will be required to complete the upgrades within three years.

Public Address Systems:

Upgrades to camera and radio systems as well as to hand-held radios have been the near-term priorities for BOP. BOP is currently in the process of conducting an initial assessment of public address systems at each institution to determine whether there is a need to address any inoperable, outdated, or malfunctioning systems; or other deficits. BOP will inform the Committee of the results of this assessment in the next report.

The BOP remains committed to staff and inmate safety, including efforts towards identifying resources for upgrading the enterprise-wide security camera systems, replacing obsolete LMR systems and hand-held radios, and keeping the Congress apprised of future developments in this area.

Appendix A

Prison Camera Reform Act of 2021 (P.L. 117–321)

Section 3

SEC. 3. REQUIRED PLAN FOR REFORM OF BOP SECURITY CAMERA AND RADIO COVERAGE AND CAPABILITIES.

(a) **PLAN.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Bureau of Prisons shall—

(1) evaluate the security camera, land-mobile radio (referred to in this Act as “LMR”), and public address (referred to in this Act as “PA”) systems in use by the Bureau of Prisons as of the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a plan for ensuring that all Bureau of Prisons correctional facilities have the security camera, LMR, and PA system coverage and capabilities necessary to—

(A) ensure the health and safety of staff and Federal inmates; and

(B) ensure the documentation and accessibility of video evidence that may pertain to misconduct by staff or inmates, negligent or abusive treatment of inmates, or criminal activity within correctional facilities.

(b) **CONTENTS.**—The plan required under subsection (a) shall—

(1) identify and include plans to address any deficiencies in the security camera system in use at Bureau of Prisons correctional facilities, including those related to—

(A) an insufficient number of cameras;

(B) inoperable or malfunctioning cameras;

(C) blind spots;

(D) poor quality video; and

(E) any other deficits in the security camera system;

(2) identify and include plans to adopt and maintain any security camera system upgrades needed to achieve the purposes described in subsection (a), including—

(A) conversion of all analog cameras to digital surveillance systems, with corresponding infrastructure and equipment upgrade requirements;

(B) upgrades to ensure the secure storage, logging, preservation, and accessibility of recordings such that the recordings are available to investigators or Courts at such time as may be reasonably required; and

(C) additional enterprise-wide camera system capabilities needed to enhance the safety and security of inmates and staff;

(3) identify and include plans to address any deficiencies in the LMR and PA systems in use at Bureau of Prisons correctional facilities, including those related to—

(A) an inadequate number of radios;

(B) inoperable, outdated, or malfunctioning LMR or PA systems;

(C) areas of Bureau of Prisons correctional facilities that lack adequate reception for radio operation;

(D) radios that lack an emergency notification feature (also known as a “man down” function), which automatically sends an alert and transmits the location of that radio in the event the wearer is in a prone position; and

(E) any other deficits in the LMR or PA systems;

(4) include an assessment of operational and logistical considerations in implementing the plan required under subsection (a), including—

(A) a prioritization of facilities for needed upgrades, beginning with high security institutions;

(B) the personnel and training necessary to implement the changes; and

(C) ongoing repair and maintenance requirements; and

(5) include a 3-year strategic plan and cost projection for implementing the changes and upgrades to the security camera, LMR, and PA systems identified under paragraphs (1) through (4).

(c) **IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE.**—Not later than 3 years after the date on which the plan is submitted under subsection (a)(2), and subject to appropriations, the Director of the Bureau of Prisons shall complete implementation of the submitted plan.

(d) **ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS.**—Beginning 1 year after the date on which the plan is submitted under subsection (a)(2), and each year thereafter until the end of the 3-year period described in subsection (c), the Director of the Bureau of Prisons shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report on the progress of the implementation of the submitted plan.